CALFED
Bay-Delta Program:
Ecosystem Restoration Program

Public / Stakeholder Update
August 12, 1999 Issue 1

Upper Yuba River
Studies Program

Inside this Issue...

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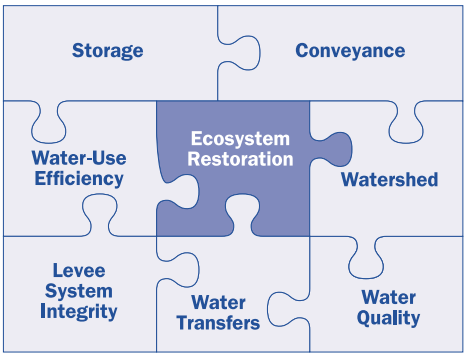
For decades in the Bay-Delta, how much water to take from the system and when, protecting endangered species, maintaining water quality and protecting those who live and work in the Delta itself were stumbling blocks to fixing problems as they arose.

History of Delta Decline Drives CALFED Ecosystem Restoration

With little agreement and a lot of gridlock, over the years the Bay-Delta system has declined. There is no one single cause of decline, but many actions over a long period have led to conflict over how to both use and restore the Bay-Delta. CALFED was created to address these issues and has identified four primary problem areas:

- *Declining habitats and some native species listed as endangered*
- *Impaired water quality*
- *Reduced water supply reliability*
- *Weakened Delta levees pose a high risk of failure*

In June 1999, CALFED released a Preferred Program Alternative. The Preferred Program Alternative consists of four strategies for solving each of the Bay-Delta problem areas with eight programs to carry out strategies in an integrated manner.



The objective of CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program is to develop comprehensive plans to restore ecological processes, habitats, and species on rivers and tributaries to the Bay-Delta. The Upper Yuba River Studies Program will examine the feasibility of introducing anadromous fish species, primarily spring-run chinook salmon and steelhead trout, to the Upper Yuba River.

History of the Upper Yuba River Studies Program

Spring-run chinook salmon have declined throughout the Central Valley and are listed as a threatened species under the State Endangered Species Act. Likewise, steelhead trout population declines led to their listing as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Steelhead and spring-run chinook salmon require cool streams found in headwater areas high in the watershed. Biological data indicates that the Yuba River above Englebright Dam historically had habitat that supported steelhead and spring-run chinook. In 1998, the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan recommended a study plan to determine if returning steelhead and spring-run to the river was feasible by changing Englebright Dam (Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan, March 1999).

At a December 9, 1998, meeting held in Olivehurst, California, the public made it clear to CALFED staff that the programmatic action described in the Ecosystem Restoration Plan had misstated CALFED's intent. Subsequently, the plan was revised to emphasize the restoration of the steelhead and spring-run salmon and various options to achieve that end.

Because public participation is an essential part of the program, CALFED contacted involved stakeholders to obtain recommendations for small (10-12 people)

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stakeholder groups to assist in developing study issues for the Upper Yuba River watershed. CALFED convened three small workgroups, now named the Lake, River and Agency teams. These teams represent property and business owners, water supply and power organizations, environmental, fisheries, and recreation organizations, and State and Federal agencies with resource management responsibilities. The Upper Yuba River Workgroup has developed a set of issues and recommended feasibility studies to help guide a comprehensive decision-making process.

CALFED Decision-Making Process

CALFED wants to make a timely decision regarding the feasibility of introducing chinook salmon and steelhead to the Upper Yuba River watershed. This decision must be based on credible scientific evidence with full consideration of potential adverse or beneficial environmental, biological, and socio-economic effects.

CALFED has required a collaborative effort among competing interests in this issue to provide balance, communication, and education. Serious issues exist regarding the quality of upstream habitat, mercury contamination of the environment, the role of Englebright Dam in flood control for the Yuba-Sutter area, power generation, water supply reliability, recreation, and business and property values.

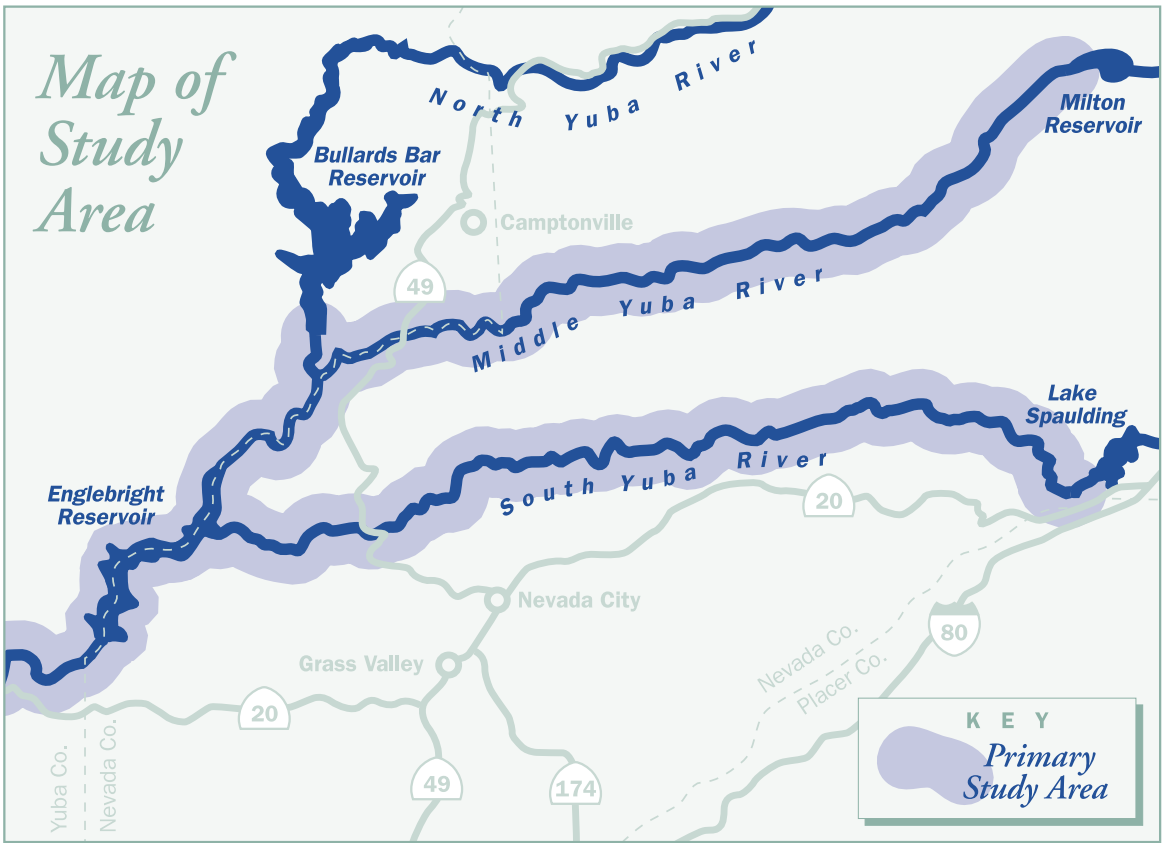
Achieving a Balance

An innovative, open process will be used to address the issues and concerns voiced at the public meetings in Olivehurst and Penn Valley in December 1998 and January 1999.

The public's issues and concerns have been discussed and refined by the Upper Yuba River Workgroup. Although the accomplishments of this Workgroup have been impressive, we must ensure that all voices are heard. The Workgroup would like to hear your opinions and have scheduled five public workshops in September 1999.

September Public Meetings
(see back page for details)

September 7	*Olivehurst*
September 8	*Rocklin*
September 9	*Nevada City*
September 14	*Oakland*
September 16	*Yuba City*



Upper Yuba River Workgroup Recommendations

Introduction

On June 18, 1999, the Lake, River, and Agency Teams met together as the Upper Yuba River Workgroup in Grass Valley, California. The primary goal of the meeting was to reach agreement on the Upper Yuba River Studies Program purpose, its phases, definition of the study area, the process, and the specific parameters for each key issue area identified in the stakeholder groups. The following is a summary of the major agreements reached during the Workgroup meeting.

MAJOR AGREEMENTS

Purpose Statement

To determine if introduction of wild chinook salmon and steelhead to the Upper Yuba River watershed is biologically, environmentally, and socio-economically feasible over the long term.

Study Phases

Phase 1 - Stakeholder Workgroups

- Purpose: Develop a list of study recommendations from which technical experts will develop feasibility study scopes of work
- Completion date: September 1999

Phase 2 - Feasibility Study

- Purpose: Complete feasibility studies for priority issues identified by the Upper Yuba River Workgroup
- Completed within 18 months

Phase 3 - Study Analysis

- Purpose: Evaluate the results of analyses and have the combined stakeholder group make recommendation on next step(s)
- Estimated completion within six months of completion of Phase 2

Study Area

Definition

- On the South Yuba River to Lake Spaulding
- On the Middle Yuba River to Milton Reservoir
- On the North Yuba River to New Bullards Bar Reservoir
- See map on page 2

Additional Comment

- It is important to have flexible study area boundaries to accommodate individual issue areas as they are analyzed
- In order to capture the water supply effects, the study area will include the watershed above each of the three upper reservoirs, the Bear River, American River, and Auburn Ravine drainages
- Both natural and human-made barriers up to the upper reservoirs should be assessed
- Tributary analyses, defined by the technical experts, are necessary to determine the overall scope of potential fish habitat

Defining Feasibility

- The Workgroup will need to evaluate/define feasibility (criteria) for each issue area
- This issue will be revisited by the Workgroup during the development of the scopes of work
- Each study should satisfy the following broad criteria:
  - *Meets the purpose statement*
  - *Complete*
  - *Credible*
  - *Flexible*
  - *Practical*
  - *Incremental*
  - *Satisfies any basic cost/benefit analysis*
- Complete a search of available information on the Yuba River

Study Process and Options

- The process should be defined as a threshold feasibility study since no proposed project or action exists at this time
- NEPA/CEQA processes should be addressed later, if necessary
- Evaluate all issue areas in the context of these options:

  Stand Alone Options
  - *A no action alternative*
  - *Decommissioning*
  - *New or alternate channels*
  - *Dry dam*

  Options in Combination with Others
  - *Lowering the dam*
  - *Fish ladder*

Continued

Workgroup Recommendations
Continued

ISSUE AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal in identifying key concerns and evaluation factors is to develop scopes of work with as much specificity as possible. All Workgroup participants recognize that the process is still developing and that flexibility is paramount for good study results. The Workgroup recognized that many of the evaluation factors need clarification and technical review by study experts during the preparation of technical scopes for the study Request for Proposals. In some cases, technical experts will be relied upon to provide more detail or propose study methodologies and approaches (i.e., economics, tributary analyses, etc.) that expand or combine issue area evaluation factors. Some studies may be inappropriate for a feasibility-level study and reserved for future study if that becomes necessary. The Workgroup will remain involved with and provide input to the study process as it evolves. The following six issues areas were discussed.

Upstream Habitat

Level of Detail

- Study should:
  - *Focus on steelhead and spring-run chinook*
  - *Examine upstream tributaries in addition to main forks*
  - *Examine flow requirements for fall-run and spring-run chinook and steelhead*
- Use several different investigative methodologies to provide credibility

Factors for Habitat Evaluation

- Potential restorable habitat including an analysis of:
  - *Amount of existing and potential fishery habitat*
  - *Inventory of current spawning and spring-run holding habitat*
  - *Potential passage problems at Log Cabin and Our House Dams for downstream migrating fish*
  - *Structural (human-made and natural) and operational barriers*
- Spawning gravel size distribution and permeability
- Evaluate river flows and water quality as it pertains to maintaining fisheries in the Upper Yuba River
- Examine upstream reservoir operations regarding:
  - *seasonal and daily water temperature data for the Yuba River watershed*
  - *releases required to maintain proposed fisheries*
- Comparison of current, historic, and potential river flows
- Determine overall water quality
- Forest management practices and how they relate to water quality

Fisheries Evaluation

- Existing aquatic environment on or in the lake to determine potential effects on resident fish populations
- Abundance and distribution of Upper Yuba fish
- Potential predation of currently segregated species (e.g. young salmon and resident fish species in Englebright Lake)
- Spawning cycles and lifestages in Upper Yuba River

Other Factors for Evaluation

- The effects of upstream recreation, mining, logging, development, and other activities on endangered species
- Volumes and types of sediment currently transported in the upper river

Key Issues and Concerns

- Upstream Habitat for Salmon and Steelhead: Field investigations are necessary to determine if existing and potential habitat and fish passage conditions above Englebright Dam are suitable for spring-run chinook salmon and steelhead trout.
- Condition of Habitat Downstream of Englebright Dam: Fish habitat conditions below Englebright Dam contribute to maintaining healthy populations of fall-run chinook salmon and other anadromous fish.
- Public Health and Safety (Flood Control): Programs that maintain or increase flood protection while improving environmental conditions are favored.
- Economic Effects: The potential adverse and beneficial economic results need to be evaluated. These include property values, business values, power generation, and recreation.
- Sediment Control and Water Quality: The quantity of sediment captured by Englebright Dam needs to be accurately determined. The presence or absence of contaminants such as mercury in the sediments needs to be analyzed.
- Water Supply Effects: Water management in the system needs to be analyzed to determine if ecological improvements can be obtained without compromising or providing water supplies.

Additional Comments

- Look at Yuba as a system — evaluate potential benefits resulting from the segregation of spring-run chinook and fall-run chinook

Downstream Habitat

Evaluation Factors

- Effect on downstream habitat resulting from upstream habitat activities
- Water temperature
- Water flows
- Substrate condition
- Sediment transport from the upper river to the lower river and its effect on habitat, including riparian habitat
- Mercury and other heavy metal contamination
- Effects of streambed armoring due to interception of gravel flow by dam

Public Health and Safety (Flood Control)

Evaluation Factors

- Sediment releases — effects of both sudden and ongoing
- Consider dredging, especially with dry dam
- Consider removal of sediment before it goes down the river
- Effects of steelhead listing on dredging
- Effects on hydraulic capacity and flood management
- Flood implications of re-operation
- Restore ecosystem and provide improved flood protection
- Quantify flood control and fire fighting contribution
- Consider improved floodplain interceptions
- Levee setbacks

Additional Comments

- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) must be an integral player in this issue area
- People and property first, then ecosystem is restored
- Work with USACE and Yuba County Water Agency on existing flood control studies/programs
- Not acceptable to increase flood dangers downstream
- Sutter and Yuba Counties need to be left whole in terms of flood control

Economics

Evaluation Factors

- Establish a baseline from which economic benefits or losses can be measured
- Effects on property, business, hydro-electric, water supply, and water storage (loss of water upstream) values
- Effects on local government tax revenues (sales tax and property tax)
- Set economic thresholds for each option
- Compare negative local impacts with potential positive benefits elsewhere
- Evaluate the economic value of sediment

Additional Comments

- "Grandfather Clause" (CALFED endangered species assurances) for Endangered Species Act is an important issue for local property and business owners
- Consider economic benefits of altering the existing environment
- Set guidelines for:
  - *Defining the scope of economic analysis*
  - *Use of comparative data examples*
  - *Establishing regulatory compliance liability*
- Statewide economic effects of not restoring fish is important to feasibility
- Have an economist determine the appropriate brackets or parameters to assess impacts
- Balance analysis among each option
- The studies should show impacts and benefits of all actions
- Nevada County expressed concerns for economic evaluation in four main areas:
  - *baseline property values*
  - *economic analysis of negative and positive effects*
  - *the true cost of restoring the fisheries*
  - *including regional, statewide, and local effects in the analysis*
- Yuba County expressed additional concerns about the Lower Yuba River values without Englebright Dam

Sediment Control & Water Quality Effects

Evaluation Factors

- Rate of change in bio-accumulation of mercury
- Characterize sediment
- Factors affecting sediment transport
- Understand chemical composition and volume
- Examine factors affecting mercury methylation
- Determine mercury and sediment inflow rates and sources
- Determine if toxins have entered the food chain and the extent of risk of increased rate of absorption
- Determine effects of sediment downstream due to removal of reservoir or changes in operations
- Identify removal techniques, cost, and potential disposal sites
- Review other literature and agencies' information on mercury and silt accumulation
- Put the USGS in the lead for the study evaluation

Continued

Workgroup Recommendations
Continued

Water Supply Effects

Clarify Upper Yuba River Watershed's role (above Spaulding and Jackson Meadows) to its headwaters in supplying water for the region

- Identify specific water supply effects, in terms of water quantity and flow pattern
- Study effects in full range of water year types
- Identify water needs of new fisheries
- Identify impacts of water diversion to other watersheds (i.e., Bear and American Rivers)
- Consider effect of agricultural water shortages on rural character and economy of the region
- Identify system improvements/replacements/supplies/mitigation
- Conduct a water rights assessment
- Review general plans/growth constraints
- Effects on Pacific Gas & Electric, Nevada Irrigation District, and Yuba County Water Agency power supplies and demand
- Effects on groundwater users
- Water purveyors need to be left whole in terms of water supply

Where to Find Information on the Upper Yuba River Studies Program

Program website — http://calfed.ca.gov (select *Programs*, then select *Upper Yuba River Studies Program*)

Toll-free public information telephone line — 1-800-700-5752

CALFED News, EcoUpdate, factsheets, and public meetings — available from:
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Attn: Upper Yuba River Studies Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814
phone: 916-657-2666

Process: Preparing for Studies and Public Meetings

Study Preparation

- Each of the three teams will identify two representatives to form a committee to develop and propose a specific process to:
  - *develop scopes of work and RFPs for each study area and determine the evaluation factors to be studied in the feasibility phase*
  - *evaluate and recommend selection of consultants to perform the studies*
  - *facilitate regular reporting and information exchange between the Upper Yuba River Workgroup and the consultants*
  - *The process for conducting the studies will be brought back to the Upper Yuba River Workgroup for discussion and approval*

Public Meetings

- Each of the three teams will identify two representatives to participate in the preparation and presentation of the public meetings
- The Workgroup agreed that a broader public outreach program was necessary and requested that CALFED provide funding

Additional Comments

- Technical experts will work closely with the Upper Yuba River Workgroup to initiate a scoping process to clarify key issues that are appropriate for the level of detail in a feasibility study
- The combined larger stakeholder group will provide an ongoing advisory role for technical analyses and be briefed at milestones
- There was discussion that a broader public outreach program might include:
  - *Multi-media presentation*
  - *Periodic public meetings*
  - *Interactive web site*
  - *Document or regular newsletter*

Upper Yuba River Studies Workgroup Representatives and Alternates

Curt Aikens
Yuba County Water Agency

Dick Akin
Sutter County Board of Supervisors

Charlie Alpers
U.S. Geological Survey

Allison Bettencourt
Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nevada County Resource Conservation District

Tom Borden
Citizens Allied Against Lake Englebright Destruction

Rance Broda
Gold Country Flyfishers

Larry Brown
U.S. Geological Survey

Jen Carville
Friends of the River

Henry DeLamur
Yuba Sutter Flood Control Committee

Neil Dubrovsky
U.S. Geological Survey

Allan Eberhart
Sierra Club

Steve Edmondson
National Marine Fisheries Service

Jim Eicher
Bureau of Land Management

Steve Evans
Friends of the River

Tim Feller
Citizens Allied Against Lake Englebright Destruction

Mike Fitzwater
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance

Shawn Garvey
South Yuba River Citizens League

Kevin Goishi
Pacific Gas & Electric

Mary Grim
Tahoe National Forest

Doug Grothe
US Army Corp of Engineers

Karl Halupka
National Marine Fisheries Service

Brent Hastey
Yuba County Water Agency

Bruce Herring
South Yuba River Citizens League

Joe Holmberg
US Army Corp of Engineers

Doni Hubbard
Citizens Allied Against Lake Englebright Destruction

Mary Keller
Sutter County

Carol Kennedy
Tahoe National Forest

George Leipzig
Penn Valley Chamber of Commerce

Dan Logue
Yuba Sutter Flood Control Committee

Einer Maisch
Placer County Water Agency

Elizabeth Martin
Nevada County Board of Supervisors

Carl Mesick
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Terry Mills
CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Bill Mitchell
Yuba County Water Agency

Dave Munro
Skipper's Cove Marina

John Nelson
California Department of Fish and Game

Les Nicholson
Nevada Irrigation District

Ray Patton
California Department of Parks and Recreation

Steve Peirano
Pacific Gas & Electric

John Regan
South Yuba River Citizens League

Marc Reisner
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations

Barbara Rivenes
Sierra Club

Larry Sanders
South Yuba River Citizens League

Craig Seltenrich
Pacific Gas & Electric

Hal Stocker
Yuba County Board of Supervisors

Kerri Timmer
Yuba Watershed Council

Mal Toy
Placer County Water Agency

Steve Trafton
Trout Unlimited

Julie Tupper
U.S. Forest Service

Cara Wasilewski
South Yuba River Citizens League

Mike Winter
Lake Wildwood Association

David Yardas
Environmental Defense Fund

Yes, please add me to the Upper Yuba River Studies Program mailing list to receive information and advance notification of upcoming public meetings.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

City/Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____

Clip this form and mail it to:
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Upper Yuba River Studies Program
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Upcoming Public Meetings

Meeting Format

7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Workgroup Presentations

8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Structured Questions and Comments using Written Cards

9 p.m. to 10 p.m. Informal One-on-One with Workgroup Members

September 7, 1999, 7:00 p.m.
Olivehurst
Olivehurst Community Center
4979 Olivehurst Avenue, Youth Center Drive

Olivehurst

September 8, 1999, 7:00 p.m.
Rocklin
The Finnish Temperance Hall
4090 Rocklin Road

Rocklin

September 9, 1999, 7:00 p.m.
Nevada City
The Miners Foundry
325 Spring Street

Nevada City

September 14, 1999, 7:00 p.m.
Oakland
The Edward R. Roybal Auditorium and Conference Center
1301 Clay Street, Room 280N

Oakland

September 16, 1999, 7:00 p.m.
Yuba City
Yuba-Sutter Fair, Franklin Hall
442 Franklin Avenue

Yuba City

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